The Moderating Impact of Social Networks on the Relationships Among Core Values, Partisanship, and Candidate Evaluations

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Social networks are increasingly becoming recognized as a source of influence on political attitudes and behavior. In this study, we examine the moderating impact of social networks on the relationship among several attitudes. We argue that those who regularly interact with individuals with different views from their own will be more likely to think of themselves in nonpartisan terms. It is therefore hypothesized that an individual's discussion network influences the relationship between one's support for various core values and one's partisanship. As a corollary, we argue that disagreement in discussion networks reduces individuals' reliance on partisanship when forming subsequent attitudes. To test these propositions, we employ data asking respondents to list individuals with whom they discuss politics on a regular basis and who such individuals supported in a recent election to create a measure of network disagreement. Empirical tests provide strong support for our hypotheses.

Recent advances in political science research highlight the importance political context has on individual attitudes and behavior. In order to fully understand how and why individuals behave in a certain manner, researchers must take into account both the individuals' personal characteristics and the context of their surrounding environment. In this study, we examine how the context of social networks influences the causes and consequences of individuals' partisanship. In particular, we examine if the relationships between one's values and partisanship, and between one's partisanship and candidate evaluations, are moderated by the makeup of one's network.

Building on conceptualizations of partisanship that emphasize its role as a social identity, we argue that those who regularly interact with individuals with different political views will be less likely to think of themselves in exclusively partisan terms, instead identifying as part of their social circle as well. It is consequently hypothesized that (1) disagreement in one's discussion network will moderate the relationship between one's support for various core values and one's partisanship; and (2) disagreement in one's discussion network will reduce one's reliance on partisanship when forming subsequent attitudes, as partisanship will be a less reliable shortcut.

To test these hypotheses, we utilize data from the 2000 American National Election Study (ANES), which asks respondents to list individuals with whom they regularly discuss politics and who such individuals supported in the 2000 election. Results suggest that for individuals regularly exposed to political viewpoints different from their own, the relationship between values and partisanship is weakened. Additionally, the results demonstrate that there is a significant decrease in the impact of partisanship on candidate evaluations as the amount of disagreement in one's discussion network increases, suggesting individuals in cross-cutting networks are less reliant on partisanship. These findings are consistent with a growing body of evidence documenting the powerful influence of one's discussion network on attitudes and behavior (e.g., Huckfeldt, Johnson, & Sprague, 2004; Mutz, 2006).

Background

Considerable evidence suggests that partisanship is a pervasive predictor of attitudes and vote choice in both the American and comparative contexts (e.g., Campbell, Converse, Miller, & Stokes, 1960; Dalton, 2008; Lewis-Beck, Jacoby, Norpoth, & Weisberg, 2008). For example, partisanship affects issue positions (Jacoby, 1988) as well as how individuals respond to and evaluate information (Gaines, Kuklinski, Quirk, Peyton, & Verkuilen, 2007; Nyhan & Reifler, 2010). It is not only political attitudes and behavior but also nonpolitical attitudes and behavior that are influenced by partisanship—for example, perceptions of the economy (e.g., Bartels, 2002; Lewis-Beck et al., 2008) and consumption behavior (Gerber & Huber, 2009) are both related to partisanship.

Scholars have also looked to core values as possible determinants of political attitudes and behavior. Building upon research by Rokeach (1973), who classified values as the desirable and undesirable end states of human existence, Schwartz has defined values as incorporating five major characteristics: values are (1) beliefs that (2) describe desirable end states, (3) provide a motivation for, and evaluation of, behavior, (4) transcend specific situations, and (5) are ordered hierarchically (Schwartz, 1992; Schwartz & Bilsky, 1987). Precisely because values are explicitly goal driven and "transsituational" (e.g., Schwartz, 1992), they have been hypothesized as important and ubiquitous determinants of stable political attitudes and behavior. That is, in contrast to more transient attitudes and opinions, which may be the product of "top-of-the-head" responses (e.g., Zaller, 1992), values are stable across cultures (Schwartz, 1992) and issue frames (Jacoby, 2006). Although some scholars have sought to diminish the role of value preferences as determinants of political attitudes and behaviors, arguing they merely reflect cultural "truisms" (Maio & Olson, 1998) and are easily manipulable (Nelson, Clawson, & Oxley, 1997; Tetlock, 1986), other studies have demonstrated that individuals possess transitive, hierarchical value structures (Jacoby, 2006; Schwartz, 1992).

Indeed, despite disagreements regarding the specific values that should be included in analyses of public opinion and voting behavior (Feldman, 2003), strong evidence has emerged regarding the general role of values in shaping individuals' political orientations. Values influence individuals' attitudes on a wide array of issues—for example, social welfare (Feldman & Steenbergen, 2001) and government spending (Jacoby, 2006)—as well as individuals' candidate evaluations (Feldman, 1988), tolerance judgments (Peffley, Knigge, & Hurwitz, 2001), and beliefs about racial equality (Kinder & Sanders, 1996). Thus, a considerable literature now suggests values should be considered in studies examining individual-level determinants of political attitudes and behavior.

The Importance of Social Networks

Individual characteristics are not, however, the only determinants of attitudes and behavior. From the earliest studies of political behavior, it was argued that context was important (Berelson, Lazarsfeld, & McPhee, 1954; Lazarsfeld, Berelson, & Gaudet, 1944), and a large body of American

and comparative research demonstrates that contextual factors influence political attitudes and behavior (e.g., Dalton & Anderson, 2011; Grant, Mockabee, & Monson, 2010; Huckfeldt, Levine, Morgan, & Sprague, 1999; Huckfeldt, Sprague, & Levine, 2000; Rohrschneider & Loveless, 2010). In this study, we focus on social networks as an important contextual influence on individually held values and attitudes.

In their seminal work describing the powerful influence of discussion networks on political attitudes and behavior, Lazarsfeld et al. (1944) demonstrate that "cross-pressured" individuals who experience conflicting cues from one or more political predispositions are more likely than individuals with consistent predispositions to delay their vote intention during the course of the campaign (Lazarsfeld et al., 1944, 56–69). Disagreement among one's family, friends, and other close associates with whom one regularly discusses politics plays a large role in postponing and altering vote choice, which the authors argue is due to the intimacy and perceived trustworthiness of the contacts (Lazarsfeld et al., 1944, 155). The concept of "cross-pressure," specifically the influence of common political disagreement, underlies much of the contemporary study of discussion networks on political attitudes and behavior (Huckfeldt, Johnson et al., 2004; Huckfeldt & Sprague, 1995; Mutz, 2006; Visser & Mirabile, 2004).

Social networks influence political participation, where some evidence suggests disagreement in a network increases participation (Klofstad, 2007; Leighley, 1990; McClurg, 2003), while other evidence suggests it decreases participation (Huckfeldt, Mendez, & Osborn, 2004; Mutz, 2002a, 2006), at least for some (McClurg, 2006). Disagreement in social networks influences the probability of defecting from one's party when voting (Beck, 2002) and the likelihood of voting "correctly" (Ryan, 2011; Sokhey & McClurg, 2012). Being exposed to multiple viewpoints may increase the democratic capacity of citizens by positively affecting both tolerance and knowledge (McClurg, 2003; Mutz, 2002b, 2006).

Recent political and social psychology findings demonstrate that social networks can modify attitudes. Ben-Nun Bloom and Levitan (2011) find that network heterogeneity predicts openness to persuasion, with the notable exception that framing issues in terms of morality moderates or even reverses this relationship. Levitan and Visser (2008) also find a conditional relationship between network makeup and persuasion: network heterogeneity predicts attitude change, but only when a respondent is presented with a strong rather than a weak argument. Close-knit social networks decrease the "integrative complexity" of political thought, meaning individuals are less likely to adopt a variety of perspectives and recognize the connections among such perspectives when part of close-knit networks, except where networks are both diverse and extensive, incorporating different viewpoints from a variety of social milieus (Erisen & Erisen, 2012). Further, one's social environment can influence the stability and accessibility of attitudes (Huckfeldt & Sprague, 2000), and socially heterogeneous networks moderate attitude strength (Levitan & Visser, 2009; Visser & Mirabile, 2004), rendering them both less resistant to persuasion and less stable. Finally, we note that the impact of social networks on attitudes and behavior generalizes beyond the United States (see, for example, Ikeda & Richey, 2009; Pammett, 1991; Schmitt-Beck, Weick, & Christoph, 2006).

The Moderating Influence of Social Networks

The content of the political discourse to which an individual is exposed is partially a function of those with whom the individual regularly discusses politics. Some social circles expose individuals to competing views more regularly, while others are better characterized as homogenous. An individual who regularly discusses current events with discussants who support views different from her own is more likely to be exposed to contrary opinions. We argue that such interactions will cause individuals to be more likely to reconsider their own partisan identity. It is important to note that

disagreement in networks is pervasive (Huckfeldt, Johnson et al., 2004; Huckfeldt & Sprague, 1995; Mutz, 2006), suggesting that even if individuals prefer to avoid conflict, doing so would prove difficult. Moreover, there are many interactions that individuals cannot avoid: for example, evidence demonstrates that interactions in the workplace act as a potential source of disagreement with implications for, among other things, political tolerance (Mutz & Mondak, 2006).

As early as *The American Voter* (Campbell et al., 1960), partisanship was defined as an affective attachment to a political party, which argued that an individual's party acts as a reference group. Building from Tajfel's (1978) definition of social identity, which emphasizes the importance that group membership can have on one's self-identity and subsequent behavior, partisanship has been even more explicitly conceptualized as a social identity (e.g., Greene, 1999, 2004; Weisberg & Greene, 2003). Based on this conceptualization, it has been argued, and evidence suggests, that partisanship shapes a range of attitudes and behaviors, including vote choice (Lewis-Beck et al., 2008), candidate evaluations (Goren, 2002; Rahn, 1993), and perceptions of the economy (Bartels, 2002). Recently, partisanship has been defined as a social identity based on an individual's "primary social group and [his] mental image of the parties" (Green, Palmquist, & Schickler, 2002, p. 21). Importantly, research from social psychology demonstrates that group attachments form relatively easily (Sherif, 1966; Tajfel, Billig, Bundy, & Flament, 1971) and that individuals can hold multiple social identities simultaneously (Turner, Oakes, Haslam, & McGarty, 1994). This last finding in particular forms the basis of our argument.

We argue that individuals who regularly discuss politics with both like-minded and opposing partisans belong not to one political group, but two: their political party and their social circle. While party membership likely reinforces existing beliefs, belonging to a diverse social circle may encourage individuals to reconsider their own party identification more frequently, which should therefore weaken the relationship between it and other attitudes. In particular, we examine the relationship between partisanship and values—specifically, support for egalitarianism, limited government, and moral traditionalism—as well as the relationship between partisanship and candidate evaluations.

If values truly are "transsituational" and fundamental to political attitudes and behavior, one should expect them to influence individuals' attitudes toward the central objects of the political system, the political parties. Before we discuss our hypothesis, it is important to justify the selection of values included in the analysis, particularly because agreement on what values to examine has not been easily reached (Feldman, 2003; Kuklinski, 2001). All of the values in our analysis are well-documented sources of political cleavages in American culture. Two of the values, egalitarianism and limited government, have long been included in the values literature due to their association with the American cultural tension between a desire for equality and the aversion to government interference in economic affairs (McClosky & Zaller, 1984). The third value, moral traditionalism, measures an individual's preference for traditional social and family organization (Conover & Feldman, 1986; Weisberg, 2005).

Importantly, previous analyses have documented these values' independent influence on attitudes and behavior. For example, individuals who value equality are more likely to support social welfare spending (Feldman, 1988; Feldman & Zaller, 1992; Jacoby, 2006) and racial liberalism (Kinder & Sanders, 1996) and to identify with the Democratic Party (Carmines & Layman, 1997; Keele & Wolak, 2006). Conversely, individuals who value limited government are more likely to oppose social welfare spending (Feldman, 1988; Feldman & Zaller, 1992) and gay rights (Brewer, 2003) and to identity with the Republican Party (Carmines & Layman, 1997; Keele & Wolak, 2006). Moral traditionalism influences attitudes on a variety of cultural issues—including abortion (Weisberg, 2005) and gay rights (Wilcox & Wolpert, 1996, 2000)—and has been shown to influence vote choice more directly, with individuals valuing traditional morality being more likely to identify with and support the Republican Party (Layman, 2001; Keele & Wolak, 2006; Miller & Shanks, 1996). Moreover, recent evidence from outside the United States demonstrates that support for egalitarianism is associated with voting for center-left parties, and support for free enterprise and

moral traditionalism is associated with voting for center-right parties (Schwartz, Caprara, & Vecchione, 2010). In this analysis, we seek to understand how context moderates the effect of these three core values on partisan identification.

We argue that in a socially homogenous environment, the relationship between one's values and partisanship will be reinforced, whereas in an environment where one is exposed to disagreement, one's values and partisanship will be challenged, either directly or indirectly. A wealth of evidence suggests that individuals use cues as shortcuts when evaluating political objects (e.g., Mondak, 1993; Rahn, 1993). But, cues are not always helpful, and individuals are less likely to rely on them in such a situation (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986). Given that there is a social component to partisanship (Cohen, 2003), we argue that cross-cutting social networks will attenuate the relationship between one's values and one's partisan attachment—an individual whose values and partisanship are frequently challenged will be less likely to form a partisan attachment on the basis of his or her values. In other words, one's value system will be less helpful when evaluating one's partisanship. To be clear, we do not argue that network disagreement directly influences either one's values or partisanship, but instead we argue that it weakens the relationship between the two.[1] We test this expectation by interacting support for each of the values with our measure of disagreement. We therefore hypothesize the marginal effect of one's values on the strength of one's partisan attachment is weaker among those with cross-cutting social networks.

We also recognize that this process may work in reverse. That is, it could be that when confronted with competing arguments, individuals "double down" on their beliefs and develop a stronger link between their values and partisanship. For example, Tormala and Petty (2002, 2004) find that when confronted with disagreeable information, individuals become more certain of their initial attitude; likewise, Nyhan and Reifler (2010) find that in some cases when confronted with accurate information, individuals strengthen their political misperceptions. These findings are consistent with considerable evidence that individuals—including elite actors (James & Zhang, 2005; Mintz, 2004; Mintz, Geva, Redd, & Carnes, 1997)—use cognitive shortcuts to process information and make decisions, which can result in motivated reasoning toward directional rather than accuracy goals (e.g., Kunda, 1990; Lodge & Taber, 2000). For example, Taber and Lodge (2006) note that individuals uncritically accept information that confirms their beliefs but spend cognitive effort refuting disconfirming arguments. Indeed, it is possible that in the face of contradictory arguments, individuals will strengthen their existing beliefs (Redlawsk, 2002) until they are presented with a sizeable amount of incongruent information (Redlawsk, Civettini, & Emmerson, 2010). Thus, it is possible that being exposed to disagreement in one's network will strengthen rather than weaken the relationship between values and partisanship. Our expectation, drawn from Lazarsfeld et al. (1944), however, is that because many of the discussants' respondents list may be considered close friends, and many are family members, these individuals are probably considered trustworthy and nonthreatening. Therefore, individuals may be less resistant to counterarguments from these sources as they would be from other sources, such as, for example, the news media. Further, recent evidence documents the moderating influence of social networks (e.g., Levitan & Visser, 2009).

Another challenge to our argument is that rather than one's social network influencing the relationship between values and partisanship, it could be the case that the strength of one's belief systems influences the makeup of their social network. While we cannot definitively rule out this possibility, there is some suggestive evidence. We estimated a model—drawing from work predicting deliberation (e.g., Neblo, Esterling, Kennedy, Lazer, & Sokhey, 2010)—predicting network. While we find statistically significant coefficients on some of the variables consistent with this expectation,

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[1] Our thinking on this matter is influenced by considerable evidence documenting that for many individuals both values and partisanship are enduring beliefs (Campbell et al., 1960; Schwartz, 1992). Moreover, we only find limited empirical support for the argument that disagreement directly affects either orientation.

the substantive effects are extremely small.[2] Moreover, extant work suggests that one's social network is not exclusively the result of self-selection based on political preferences (Bello & Rolfe, 2013; Huckfeldt & Sprague, 1987, 2004). Levitan and Visser (2009) examine selection effects in newly formed social networks by exploiting the quasi-random process of college dormitory assignments, finding only small and inconsistent effects of selective construction.

We further argue that disagreement also has a moderating effect on the influence of partisanship on subsequent attitudes and behavior. Our above argument suggests that when an individual has reason to question his or her social identity, the link between it and other attitudes should be weakened. Regardless of the relationship between one's values and one's partisan attachment, an individual in a cross-cutting network will be more likely—and able—to consider opposing points of view when evaluating political stimuli. Because individuals tend to use the least amount of cognitive effort possible (Eagly & Chaiken, 1993; Fiske & Taylor, 1991; Simon, 1976), when confronted with a decision given a paucity of information, they tend to rely on informational shortcuts to the greatest extent possible (Lau & Redlawsk, 2001; Lupia, 1994; Popkin, 1991; Sniderman, Brody, & Tetlock, 1991; Tversky & Kahneman, 1974). However, individuals also prefer to be accurate when making judgments (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986), suggesting that those who are frequently around individuals with opposing viewpoints will be less reliant on partisanship, as it will be a less reliable heuristic. Because individuals who regularly converse with different-minded individuals are less likely to rely on partisanship regardless of how strongly they identify with their party, the strength of the relationship between an individual's partisan identification and the evaluation of a political object will decrease as exposure to disagreement increases. In other words, we argue that a person's dual political identity—as a partisan but also as a member of social network—moderates the relationship between partisanship and candidate evaluations.

Therefore, we hypothesize that the impact of partisanship on candidate evaluations will decrease as network disagreement increases. To examine this hypothesis, we estimate a model of candidate evaluations as a function of partisanship, conditional on disagreement. Here, we expect the marginal effect of the strength of one's partisan attachment on one's candidate evaluations will be lower among those exposed to disagreement in their social network. Given the endurance of partisanship and core values, as well as the relative salience of candidate evaluations, we consider these hypotheses to be reasonable tests of the proposed theory.

Data and Methods

To test these hypotheses, we utilize data from the 2000 ANES as the survey includes a series of questions allowing respondents to list up to four individuals with whom they regularly discuss politics. Importantly, respondents are asked to identify the candidate they thought each of the listed discussants supported in the election. These responses are used to create a measure of disagreement, which is our primary variable of interest.[3] To measure disagreement, we subtract the number of discussion partners who agree with the respondent from those who disagree similar to Ikeda and Richey (2009) and Nyhan, Reifler, and Richey (2012).

The variable ranges from −4 to 4 with larger values indicating greater exposure to disagreement. The largest value would be for an individual who lists four discussants who disagree with him or her. To account for different network sizes, we ran a robustness check by dividing the measure by the total number of discussants listed and obtained identical substantive results to those we report below.[4] Although the vast majority of respondents listed discussants who voted for one of the two major

[2] The results of this analysis are available from the authors upon request.
[3] Details regarding the construction of this measure, including question wording, are available in an online appendix.
[4] We also find the same substantive results when using Nir's (2005) measure of "network ambivalence."

parties and reported doing so themselves, this measure can take into account voting for minor party candidates as well as political independents.[5]

It is important to note what the variable is and is not measuring. The measure does not capture how strongly others in the respondent's network support a candidate; instead it gauges the candidate they support. Additionally, it is measuring an individual's perception of his or her discussion partners' preferred candidate, and thus the respondent's perception of disagreement rather than actual disagreement. While Goel, Mason, and Watts (2010) find evidence that individuals underestimate disagreement, they note this is less true for close discussion partners and for those with whom the respondent reports discussing politics, consistent with other studies that find individuals' perceptions of their partners' attitudes are quite reliable (Huckfeldt & Sprague, 1987; Levitan & Visser, 2009; Moore, 1988). Although it is somewhat lamentable that we have to rely on self-reports, ultimately, if disagreement exists but is not perceived, it is not likely to have much of an impact; or, as Huckfeldt, Mendez, et al. (2004) write, similar to a "tree falling in the forest with no one to hear it, the micro-level consequences of disagreement are reduced if participants fail to recognize that disagreement is occurring" (p. 69).

Values and Partisanship

The first relationship we examine is between one's support for core values and partisanship. The dependent variable is partisanship, measured using the standard 7-point scale ranging from strong Democrat to strong Republican. The values under consideration are egalitarianism, moral traditionalism, and limited government. Each value is measured using a series of questions, and in each case, the resultant measure is reliable: the six-item egalitarianism scale has an α of 0.72; for the three-item limited government scale, α is 0.71; and, the four-item moral traditionalism scale has an α of 0.60.[6] The variables are coded so that higher values indicate greater support for the value in question. In all three cases, our expectation is that the impact of the value on partisanship will tend toward zero as disagreement increases.

Because the primary interest is the impact of each value on partisanship conditional on network disagreement, we interact each of the variables with network disagreement. However, as a consequence of interacting three variables with the same variable, there is a potential problem with collinearity. And, in this case, it is fairly significant—the resulting interaction terms correlate with one another at more than 0.9. Thus, the estimates from such a model would be unreliable. To examine the impact of values on partisanship, we include each values variable and its associated interaction in separate models in addition to creating an index of the three values variables, which we also interact with network disagreement (when creating this core values index, we recode egalitarianism so it runs in the same direction as the other two variables).

As controls, we include: Education, which is measured using a 7-point scale, ranging from less than high school to an advance degree. Based on work suggesting issues influence partisanship (e.g., Dancey & Goren, 2010; Franklin & Jackson, 1983), we include a measure of issue positions—the

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[5] The measure treats discussants who support a candidate different from the respondents the same, regardless if the discussant supported a major or minor party. For example, consider a Democrat who planned to vote for Gore who listed two Gore supporters as well as a Bush supporter and a Nader supporter. The Bush and Nader supporters are treated the same. We view this assumption as unproblematic for two reasons: first, a Gore supporter who discusses politics with a Nader supporter could get just as much push back as from a Bush supporter, albeit from a different direction ideologically; second, the results are identical when the model is estimated without third-party supporters.

[6] Details regarding the construction of these scales, including question wording, are available in an online appendix. It is worth noting that the reliability for the moral traditionalism scale is marginal; we include all four items because no combination of any fewer items results in a more reliable scale. Moreover, the "noisiness" of the scale in some sense makes our test more conservative (Iacobucci & Duhacheck, 2003).

variable consists of five issues and forms a reliable scale with an α of 0.614.[7] We also include demographic controls—age, measured in years; gender, coded 1 for women; race, coded 1 for whites; region based on census coding; union membership, coded 1 for those households with a member belonging to a union; self-reported income; church attendance; and marital status, coded 1 for married respondents. We also control for the size and sophistication of each respondent's social network. The model is estimated using linear regression.

Partisanship and Candidate Evaluations

We next examine the conditional impact of partisanship on evaluations of presidential candidates. To do so, we again use the standard measure of partisanship. In this case, it is an independent variable. The dependent variable is candidate evaluations, which is measured as the difference between one's thermometer ratings of George W. Bush and Al Gore. Thermometer ratings ask respondents to rate each candidate on a scale of 0 to 100 with higher scores indicating greater favorability. The candidate evaluations variable ranges from −100 to 100 with higher values indicating a greater preference for Bush. The quantity of interest is the marginal effect of partisanship on candidate evaluations conditioned on exposure to disagreement, as the above argument suggests those surrounded by disagreement will be less likely to rely on partisanship when evaluating the candidates.

Also included in the model are control variables. First, we include a measure of issue positions, measured using an average of several indicators of issue attitudes as coded earlier. Additionally, a measure of one's evaluation of the state of the economy is included, which ranges from 0 to 5, with higher values indicating a belief that the economy has improved in the past year. Because perceptions of candidate traits (Funk, 1999) influence candidate evaluations, we include a measure of candidate traits measured as the difference between the average rating of Bush and the average rating of Gore on seven traits.[8] We also include several demographic controls, including age, gender, race, church attendance, marital status, and income, all coded as above. We again control for the size and sophistication of the network. The model is estimated using linear regression.

Results

We present the impact of core values on partisanship in Table 1. Columns one through three contain each of the values separately, and column four presents a model with the index of the three values. Of the control variables, issues, age, race, and union membership are consistent predictors of partisanship with coefficients in the expected direction; education, income, church attendance, and marital status each predict partisanship in at least one of the models.

We wish to note that in each case the coefficient on the interaction term is statistically significant. We also present the marginal effect graphically in Figure 1. As shown in the figure, the relationship between each value and partisanship tends toward 0 as network disagreement increases. For example, as exposure to disagreement increases, the marginal effect of support for moral traditionalism moves from about 4 to slightly greater than 0. The fourth panel displays the marginal effect of an index of core values where the results again support the hypothesis that the relationship

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[7] The issues included are: defense spending, women's role, environmental regulations, government's role in guaranteeing a minimum standard of living, and public insurance. All issues are coded so that higher values correspond to more conservative positions.

[8] For candidate traits, respondents are asked to rate on a scale of 1 to 4 how well a phrase describes a candidate, ranging from extremely well to not well at all. Included in our traits measure are, the candidate: is moral, cares, is knowledgeable, has leadership, is honest, is intelligent, and is in touch with people like the respondent. We recoded each trait so that higher numbers are more favorable for the candidate. $\alpha_{\text{Bush traits}}$ is 0.688; $\alpha_{\text{Gore traits}}$ is 0.723.

Table 1. The Impact of Core Values on Party Identification, Conditioned on Network Disagreement

	Model 1		Model 2		Model 3		Model 4	
	Coef.	Std. Error	Coef.	Std. Error	Coef.	Std. Error	Coef.	Std. Error
Network disagreement	−0.450**	0.128	0.097	0.052	0.214*	0.103	0.021	0.042
Egalitarianism	−2.472**	0.324						
Network disagreement × Egalitarianism	0.570**	0.185						
Limited government			1.709**	0.155				
Network disagreement × limited government			−0.391**	0.086				
Moral traditionalism					2.106**	0.302		
Network disagreement × moral traditionalism					−0.521**	0.153		
Core values							4.224**	0.307
Network disagreement × Core values							−0.609**	0.152
Issue positions	0.53**	0.069	0.44**	0.068	0.562**	0.07	0.301**	0.068
Education	0.064	0.037	−0.007	0.036	0.081**	0.037	0.05	0.035
Age	−0.019**	0.003	−0.018**	0.003	−0.019**	0.003	−0.02**	0.003
Gender (Female = 1)	−0.007	0.111	−0.184	0.11	0.08	0.112	−0.125	0.106
Race (White respondents = 1)	1.033**	0.184	1.136**	0.175	1.463**	0.18	0.968**	0.171
Northeast	0.105	0.164	0.246	0.161	0.036	0.166	0.285	0.156
West	0.049	0.135	0.089	0.133	0.09	0.137	0.14	0.129
South	0.029	0.15	0.061	0.147	0.061	0.151	0.105	0.142
Union membership	−0.713**	0.152	−0.657**	0.148	−0.791**	0.153	−0.654**	0.143
Income	0.036	0.019	0.032	0.018	0.038*	0.019	0.02	0.018
Church attendance	0.152**	0.045	0.164**	0.044	0.056	0.048	0.058	0.044
Marital status (Married = 1)	0.261**	0.107	0.272**	0.105	0.192	0.109	0.165	0.102
Network size	−0.034	0.069	0.008	0.067	−0.032	0.07	−0.014	0.065
Network sophistication	0.049	0.11	−0.091	0.105	−0.102	0.11	−0.018	0.102
Constant	3.123**	0.36	1.487**	0.277	0.578	0.307	2.021**	0.269
N	1189		1139		1190		1138	
R^2	0.299		0.362		0.285		0.403	

Note. Coefficients represent OLS estimates. *$p < 0.05$, **$p < 0.01$.

Figure 1. The influence of disagreement on the marginal effect of core values on partisan identification, with 95% confidence intervals. Marginal effect calculated from models 1–4 presented in Table 1.

Table 2. The Impact of Partisanship on Candidate Evaluations, Conditioned on Network Disagreement

|	Coef.	Std. Error
Network disagreement	3.311**	0.999
Party identification	7.587**	0.537
Network disagreement × partisanship	−1.448**	0.262
Issue positions	3.785**	1.11
Candidate traits	26.594**	1.586
Economic perceptions	3.946**	0.748
Age	0.067	0.053
Gender (female = 1)	−0.636	1.747
Race (white respondents = 1)	−4.651	2.823
Income	0.683**	0.273
Church attendance	0.768	0.734
Marital status (married = 1)	4.872**	1.699
Network size	−4.88**	1.142
Network sophistication	6.332**	1.751
Constant	−49.008**	4.209
N	1062	
R^2	0.630	

Note. Coefficients represent OLS estimates. **$p < 0.01$.

between values and partisanship is conditional on exposure to disagreement. It is worth noting that while the impact of core values decreases, consistent with evidence of the strong relationship between values and partisanship, the impact of values on partisanship remains statistically significant across nearly the entire range of network disagreement. To test the robustness of the findings, we estimated the models presented in Table 1 with heteroskedasticity-robust standard errors as well as with ordered probit—in both cases, the results were substantively identical to those presented here.[9] The results from these analyses are available from the authors upon request.

We now test the hypothesis that the impact of partisanship on candidate evaluations is weaker for those in social networks with disagreement. Table 2 presents the model with candidate evaluations taken as the dependent variable, where entries are coefficients with standard errors in parentheses. Among the control variables, the coefficients for issue attitudes, candidate traits, economic perceptions, income, marital status, and the two network control variables are significantly different from 0.

We first note that the coefficient for the interaction term is statistically significant and that an *F*-test suggests the addition of the term adds explanatory power to the model ($p < 0.05$). To illustrate the conditional effect of partisanship on evaluations, we graphically display the relationship between partisanship and evaluations conditional on the level of disagreement in one's network in Figure 2. The figure displays two findings: first, the impact of party identification is statistically significant across nearly the entire range of disagreement, consistent with expectations about partisanship's substantial influence on subsequent political orientations; second, consistent with the above argument, the influence of partisanship decreases as one's network contains more disagreement—moving from one standard deviation below to one standard deviation above the mean value of network disagreement, the marginal effect of partisanship decreases by about a third, a change that is statistically significant

[9] In only one of four models, Model 1, did a formal test suggest the assumption of normally distributed errors was violated. However, when we estimated the models using ordered probit, a Brant test (Brant, 1990) suggested the parallel regression assumption was violated in this model (the assumption was not violated in any of the other models). We recoded the partisanship variable by combining partisan leaners and weak identifiers given that the two are very similar (Petrocik, 2009). A Brant test following our reestimation of the model using ordered probit and the new coding suggested the parallel regression assumption was no longer violated, and the model estimation returned substantively identical results.
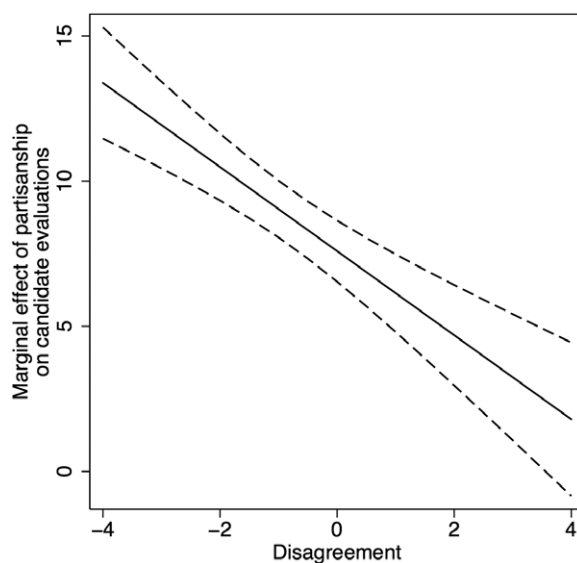
Figure 2. The influence of disagreement on the marginal effect of party identification on candidate evaluations, with 95% confidence interval. Marginal effect calculated from model presented in Table 2.

($p < 0.05$). We find support for our second hypothesis that the composition of one's social network influences the relationship between one's partisanship and one's candidate evaluations.

The analyses in this and the preceding section clearly demonstrate that the relationships among core values, partisanship, and candidate evaluations are influenced by one's social network. These findings provide further support for the proposition that partisanship, if not necessarily malleable, is at least susceptible to the influence of context. As an outcome, partisanship is less strongly related to values when one is embedded in a politically diverse social network. As an explanatory factor, the role of partisanship in the formulation of one's candidate evaluations is diminished when he or she is exposed to different viewpoints.

Conclusion

The analyses in this article were designed to examine the impact of one's discussion network on partisanship. In particular, we sought to examine if exposure to disagreement in one's social network moderates the relationship between core values and partisanship and between partisanship and candidate evaluations. In both cases, we found that the influence of network disagreement on these individual-level relationships is significant. The results demonstrated that one's support for various values, consistent with several previous studies (Carmines & Layman, 1997; Keele & Wolak, 2006), influences their partisan identity. However, the magnitude of this relationship is dependent upon one's social network. Similarly, although partisanship remains a significant predictor of candidate evaluations across nearly the entire range of network disagreement, there is a nontrivial decrease in its impact as one's discussion network contains more disagreement. Such a result is consistent with Miller's (1956) finding that a voter who supports the losing side in one-party dominated communities "shows less evidence of commitment to the candidates and issues which he supports with his vote" (p. 719)—indeed, social networks may be the underlying mechanism behind Miller's results. The findings in this article offer strong support for the idea that one's partisanship has a social component to it and that it is not based solely on one's intrinsic characteristics. Moreover, the results suggest that the impact of political discussion on attitudes is considerable.

The findings from both analyses are consistent with a growing body of evidence supporting the hypothesis that social networks influence attitudes (e.g., Huckfeldt, Mendez, & Osborn, 2004; Mutz, 2006; Mutz & Mondak, 2006) and behavior (e.g., Klofstad, 2007; Leighley, 1990; McClurg, 2003). We interpret our results as further evidence of the powerful impact that social networks have on attitudes and how individuals relate to, and evaluate, the political parties. More generally, the results speak to the importance that context has in shaping individuals' attitudes and behavior, as suggested by Berleson, Lazarsfeld, and McPhee (1954), and in particular the primacy of interpersonal communication on political attitudes (Lazarsfeld, Berelson, & Gaudet, 1944). Of course, there is also substantial evidence that individuals often engage in motivated reasoning (Lodge & Taber, 2000; Redlawsk, 2002; Taber & Lodge, 2006). Thus, future research should further examine what Druckman (2012) terms the "conditional nature of motivated reasoning" (p. 205) to tease out when individuals are more or less likely to process new information in such a manner (see also Druckman, Kuklinski, & Sigelman, 2009). We are also careful to remain agnostic on the normative implications of the influence of social networks documented in this article given evidence that network discussion can potentially contribute to incorrect voting (Ryan, 2011) and lower quality political thinking (Erisen & Erisen, 2012).

There is considerable evidence that social networks specifically influence political attitudes and behavior. One shortcoming of much of this research, including the results presented here, is that it is of a cross-sectional and observational nature. Future research should move forward by collecting data on social networks using panel and experimental data. For example, McCann (1997) demonstrates that values can change as the result of campaigns; it seems reasonable then that the influence of social networks on the relationship between values and partisanship may be influenced by campaigns. Another possibility may be that the often random nature of dorm assignments could be leveraged to answer questions about the impact of social influence on political attitudes, a strategy that has been used fruitfully elsewhere (e.g., Levitan & Visser, 2009; Sacerdote, 2001). Another avenue for future work would be to examine if the impact of other social identities, such as race and gender, are influenced by the makeup of one's social network.

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Supporting Information

Additional Supporting Information may be found in the online version of this article at the publisher's web-site:

Supplementary Material for "The Moderating Impact of Social Networks on the Relationships among Core Values, Partisanship, and Candidate Evaluations"